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**Subject:** Microsoft settlement

I am dissappointed in the DOJ settlement of the Microsoft Antitrust vs US & States.

The settlement provides for a penalty much less than the face value of 1 Billion for several reasons.

- 1) 1 Billion is MS Software and old office computers to a class of citizens not currently using Microsoft products, resulting in no loss of customers.
- 2) Except as subtracted out of profit (which won't be realised with low-income families), the 1 Billion represents pennies on the dollar, it's pure hypothetical profit.
- 3) It does nothing to address the issue of monopolistic practices by MicroSoft(tm). Government oversight of monopolies can result in something resembling free markets. I borrowed this from Laura DeAndrea Tyson's book, "Who's Bashing Whom?".
- 4) A 550 Million dollar writedown, this year to pay down a 5 year commitment to maybe a 10th of the 1 Billion Settlement. That's like a get-out-of-jail card, allowing them to look very profitable Pro-forma, since a writedown excuse large hunks of liability. Buy MS stock on the news of this settlement, I heard. It's a marketing expense disguised as a "off the books" writedown.

This all looks like accounting trickery.

I'd be happy with anything that might help open interfaces, and encourage a thriving software market with diverse sources of interoperable software. That is the core of many government aquisition programs, and a result of much thought. Everywhere this happens, whether it's between hardware, software or in networks, it's an additional technical hurdle for this industry. Lowers productivity, and some say, stifles innovation.

We have to keep an eye on all the players, Sun, Apple, IBM. They have done well so far.